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# USDA Inside Information

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## IN THIS ISSUE

1979 Gold Screen Contest deadline...USDA gets "A" on President's report card...information kits for high schools...information help for Secretary's dialogue on agricultural structure...cooperative education information intern program...wholesaling information to farm magazines...and more. Don't overlook any item...some have been hard to exclaim "How did I miss that in "Inside..."

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## GOLD SCREEN CONTEST

Broadcast and visual specialist folks will have only a few hours when they read this to get their entries submitted in the 1979 Gold Screen Contest. This annual competition is sponsored by the National Association of Government Communicators to recognize outstanding broadcast and audiovisual materials. The contest is open to writers, editors, designers, photographers, information specialists, audiovisual experts and other communicators who work for federal, state, county, municipal and other governmental organizations in the United States.

Hope we have some winners, who will be honored at the annual NAGC convention in Philadelphia in November. NAGC had extended the deadline to October 1.

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## USDA GETS HIGH MARKS

The President recently issued the government's first report card on regulatory performance of 58 departments and agencies. Most were found lacking in both the ability to foresee the effects of their actions and to communicate them in plain English.

USDA was one of the few that received an "A." It was cited for being the only department that has integrated all regulatory impact analyses into a single requirement and one of the few to require such an analysis on all rules and make them available to the public. USDA's public participation plan and performance was recognized as one of the best in government.

However, when it came to "plain English," the President's report says USDA's performance has been inconsistent. But we're working on that now by offering a specially-designed course through the USDA Graduate School on writing clearer regulations.

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## WHOLESALING INFO TO FARM MAGAZINES

Gary Vacin, Kansas State University's head of extension information, undertook a study recently to find out to what extent

land-grant universities "wholesale" information to farm magazines. We believe this to be the first major study of its kind. More specifically, its objectives were to determine how much content farm magazines attribute to land-grant university sources, what subject matter topics provided by land-grant universities are carried in farm magazines, readership of articles based on information from land-grant university sources, and how farm magazine editors view land-grant university people as information sources.

Well, Gary completed the study and has published his results in a publication entitled, "How Land-Grant Universities Wholesale Information to Farm Magazines." Single copies are being distributed to university ag information heads and state extension directors by Bill Carnahan, Science and Education Administration office in Washington. Others who may be interested may contact Gary Vasin...he'll have a very limited number available for single copy distribution. He can be reached in Extension Information, Kansas State University, Umberger Hall, Manhattan, Kansas 66506.

A major point in the summary of the report is that "wholesaling" information to farm magazines is an extremely economical way for land-grant universities to get information to farmers. Universities "retail" information by sending newsletters, magazines, and publications directly to clientele, but at a much higher cost. Some comparative costs are included in the study. Data for the study were obtained through content analysis of 147 issues of 38 different farm magazines, by examining readership scores provided by farm magazines, and by a mail survey of selected farm magazine editors.

Nearly 33 percent of all news items appearing in the publications studied were attributed to land-grant university sources. More than 21 percent of the column inches came from university sources.

Extension sources contributed 14 percent of all news copy appearing in the issues studied, while agricultural experiment station sources contributed 6 percent.

Two other points in Gary's recommendations: More marketing information from land-grant universities and other sources likely would be readily accepted by farm magazine editors and appreciated by their farm readers, and more agricultural communications offices need to gear their efforts to serve farm magazines, particularly in states with state farm magazines.

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BAY OFF TO SYRIA

Ovid Bay, SEA-Extension, is off to Syria for 5 weeks to do final editing and production of the Syrian Agricultural Sector Assessment Report. He accepted the 5-week temporary assignment for USDA's Office of International Cooperation and Development (OICD). He left September 23 and will be located at the project office in Damascus. The report will be used in preparing Syria's next 5-year plan for economic and agricultural development.

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CRANKING UP FOR FARM  
STRUCTURE DIALOGUE

Several state departments of agriculture information officers and land-grant university communicators will be very much involved in planning and assisting in news coverage of the 10 public meetings on structure of agriculture and rural communities. The regional information offices administered by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service also will be helping get the word out through the news media. We'll be watching the results of this cooperative effort.

Once again, the meetings, with Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland leading the discussions, will begin Nov. 27 at Montpelier, Vermont. Other meetings and dates are: Fayetteville, North Carolina, Nov. 28; Huntsville, Alabama, Nov. 29; Sioux City, Iowa, Dec. 4; Sedalia, Missouri, Dec. 5; Wichita Falls, Texas, Dec. 6; Boulder, Colorado, Dec. 11; Spokane, Washington, Dec. 12; Fresno, California, Dec. 13; and Lafayette, Indiana, Dec. 18.

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INFO KIT FOR SCHOOLS

GPA's Special Reports Division is working with USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service in the preparation of an agricultural information kit for high schools. It will be designed for use in economics and consumer economics or education courses. It will include a teacher's guide on how the material can be used. And, it will include a glossary of agricultural terms (familiar to many of us, but not to the general public), a bibliography of publications or visuals for resource information, listing of national and field offices to be used as contacts, and copies of suitable publications. An option may be inclusion of brief summaries of current issues that are making headlines. Lillie Vincent in GPA is the contact on this project.

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USDA COOPERATION IN  
COOP INTERN PROGRAM

GPA folks are taking the initiative to have closer cooperation among USDA agency information divisions in using the cooperative education intern program. A number of agencies are interested in the program used so successfully by the Agricultural Marketing Service in the regional information offices, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service here with their national staff, and the Forest Service, both in their regional offices and here in Washington. GPA also has taken part in the program.

One purpose of the closer cooperation is to coordinate recruiting of college journalism or other communications students, and developing agreements with a wider selection of universities. Another goal is to better plan the placement of the graduates following completion of the intern program and academic studies. A student completing internship with one agency is eligible for a permanent information position with another agency.

Betty Garcia in GPA is pulling together all the information from the current participating agencies, and will make it available to others interested in the program.

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REGIONAL OFFICES

Plans moving ahead to transfer USDA regional information offices administered currently by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service to administration by Office of Governmental and Public Affairs. Probably be a few weeks before all necessary paperwork and approvals will be completed. We'll keep you posted.

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PACIFIC PUBLICATIONS

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PROCUREMENT SECTION  
CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

THEN FROM VERMONT

And, we've seen a copy of "ADRDC Progress Report '77," which summarizes research, training and outreach activities conducted by the Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center in Taiwan. The rather classy report (90 pages) was designed and edited by Paul Gwin, on loan from the University of Missouri.

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We appreciate the alert from Frederic Sargent, University of Vermont, about three USDA-funded projects in developing and demonstrating about 20 new rural-relevant techniques for land use planning. The projects were described in two books, "Rural Environmental Planning," 1976 and "Rural Water Planning," 1979.

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SPEECHES

Still looking for great, all-time speech openings? Here's one sent to us by Jim Whitman, broadcast specialist at Texas A&M University: "My job, as I understand it, is to talk to you. Yours, as I understand it, is to listen to me. If you finish before I do, just hold up your hand." Jim says that anybody who starts a speech off like that can't be all bad!

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FSQS ENERGY FAIR

October is International Energy Month, and the Food Safety and Quality Service information staff is doing its part by organizing an Energy Fair, to be held Oct. 9 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the patio of the Administration Building. Secretary Bergland and Assistant Secretary Foreman will speak at 11:30. There will be demonstrations, exhibits, and plenty of free publications, posters, and bumperstickers. All employees are invited to attend and learn how they can save energy at home and on-the-go.

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TITLES

And then Ham Kenney, Ottawa, suggests starting a run on "What's in a Title?" Just to get things started, he enclosed a copy of one of his catchy classics (1948 vintage), "Yeast Goes West." That wasn't enough. He enclosed another from the AgriCan Quarterly called "Research for Farmers." The title read "Sodium Bicarb for Acid Indigestion in Steers." However, he says it was the run-in blurb "Can Buffering Stop Steers Suffering" that raised the eyes of the editorial board. In fact, one member called Ham and said it reminded her that she had run out of Bufferin. Oh, well!